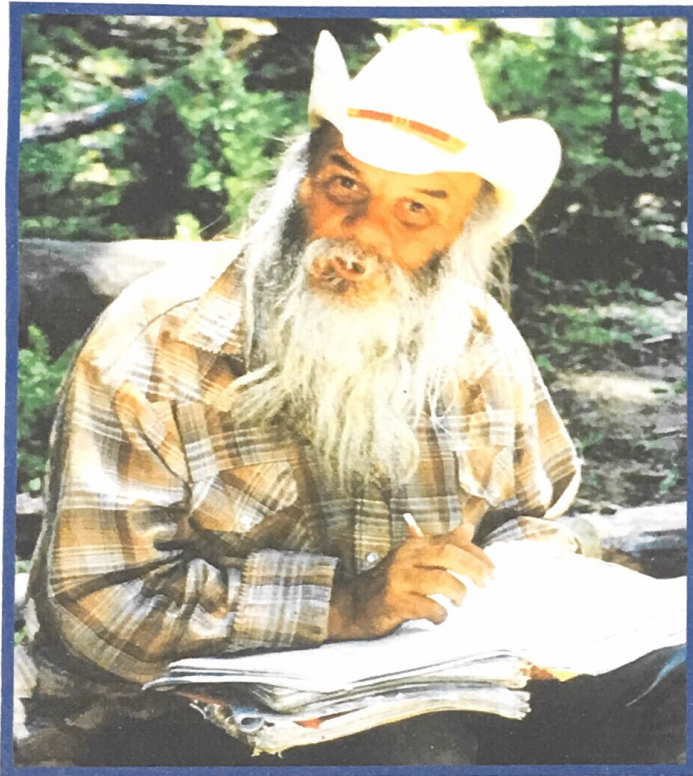




Rainbow Family

Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.*

Scanned in 2018.

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06.D HENRY - "The Largest Unorganized
Organization"

Val, Henry's father, has worked
Kid Village and the Gatherings Water
System

5 pages

[06.D]

Henry

① The Largest Unorganized Organization
(Val, Henry's father, has worked in Kid Village and the
Gathering's water system)

I was born in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in 1979. Val
my father was an auto body mechanic. My mom
worked for the IRS for a while, but when I was born,
she was just a full-time mom.

I'm the oldest of eight brothers and one sister. My
brother Vincent was born in 1981. My dad went to the
Idaho Rainbow Gathering by himself in 1982. My mother
didn't like him going.

My dad's the black sheep of his family. His father was a
doctor. He disapproved of my father going to the
gathering. So did my grandmother. When I was four and
my brother Vincent was two, my parents got divorced.

My earliest memory has to be the Rainbow Gathering in
California when I was five years old. My dad helped
out in Kid Village. He was "Val, Val, the Kiddies' pal!"
It was before Felipe ran Kid Village. I loved the gathering.

We went back to regular life. I went back to kindergarten,
which I had a hard time with. Ogden, Utah, is where I
was. I was shy there. In the gathering, I wasn't shy.

In kindergarten, kids got away with too much - the
ostracism I got from the other kids, the name-calling.
I acted differently. I was from another culture.

The big change in Ogden was having to wear certain
clothes and having to wear my hair a certain way in school.

Most of the kids there were Mormons. I had to get used
to that culture. My family weren't Mormons - we were outcasts.

In the gathering we got to be the Lost Boys [from Peter
Pan] I had hundreds of aunts and uncles there. I was
told I was adored. I missed that when I was away from
the gathering. One day you're loved and adored at the
gathering. The next day at school, you're ridiculed
and ostracized.

(10) Most grade schools at that time were inadequate in dealing with children. It was not based on what the child's feeling.

One of the teachers saw that I was shy. I wouldn't take off my coat. It was like my security blanket. So she sent me to a psychologist. They thought I was sexually abused. They called my mom and other people. It was the shell shock of the flower child.

At the time of the Missouri Gathering in 1985, I was in first grade. For three years after that, I did home schooling, which was a lot better.

My father quit his auto body work job after the Missouri Gathering. After he quit, all of a sudden we were living in a tipi.

I went back to public school in fourth grade. I started to assimilate into that society. It wasn't that difficult. I did better. I started playing basketball.

I went to school in a lot of different places - a different school every year at least, sometimes two or three. I lived with my mom and she moved around a lot. My dad would get me out of school in April and I'd go with him to scout a site for the Gathering - all the fun stuff. My dad works four months a year on the Gathering.

The 80's and 90's were a different era for policing the Gathering. There's a lot of rules and laws now that are more severe. My father never lost custody of me, but if he had me now, he would.

People volunteer their efforts for the Gathering. It's not like they have to. My father takes on a lot of responsibility there. When he takes on something besides the water supply there - the PVC pipes - he gets passionate. Like he grabs people by the neck.

My mom's been married three more times after my dad. I got along with some of my stepfathers, but my mom liked alcoholics. It was rough. My mom had the whole help-people-out complex. She had two more children, both boys.

My father has not been married since he was

① married to my mother, but he has had four more
② boys and one girl by three women.

With my dad we never owned anything. He would get bikes for us, but we would borrow them from him and so long as we maintained them, we were able to use them. It was a respect thing.

There are two things—authoritarian and authoritative. Authoritarian is all about coercion. It's demanding without nurturance. Authoritative is demanding, but there's nurturance behind it. It's more of a coaching thing or a parent thing. My father was a very authoritative parent. He believed in us, but he'd call bullshit if he saw it. At age 16, I would write real down poetry and music and he'd say, "That's great! Sort of Pink Floydish."

With my mom and dad there was a duality thing. With my mom we lived in a house and had electronics and things. With my dad we lived in the woods and ate different things.

My mom likes roast beef and meat as the center of a meal. My dad ate meat, but two of his girlfriends were good vegetarian cooks.

I went to high school until the Missouri Gathering of 1996. I was going into my junior year, but I went to Maine with Mariko, a Rainbow couple, and went blueberry-raking.

When I left for Maine that was my last moment living with my parents. I spent my last two years in an alternative school in Maine. I loved it. I got my high school degree.

I was done with school at that time. I had a huge learning gap or chasm. I joined the Army in 2001. I was there for three years.

My brother Vincent was in the Coast Guard for five years. He's one of these people that does very well in social situations. Both of us are drug-free people.

⑫ The Rainbow Gathering is the reason I didn't do drugs, I rebelled. It's around you all the time, so it's not that big a deal.

The Army has all its boot camps down South in horrible, dirty places. It was like a joke for me. I was in basic training on September 11. I was going to log grenades that day when they told us the Pentagon had been hit and the Twin Towers.

The day the Iraq ground war started, I got a pers-gram - a personal telegram. In the Army we have a way of squishing things together and destroying the English language. The pers-gram told me to go to South Korea instead of Iraq.

In South Korea we have an armistice, so I got out of there after a year and a half, a complete man with ten fingers and ten toes.

When I got out of the Army in 2004, I went into the police academy a couple of months afterwards. In the last little bit, they told me a policeman has to do anything - even lie - to get inside somebody's car to do a search.

I didn't like the whole idea of coercion and intimidation, so I decided to become a mentor instead.

I was going to college in Moab, Utah, from 2007 to 2009, studying to be an elementary school teacher. I got in trouble with the law. There was an old bike which was abandoned in front of the college. I'd go there morning and night and it was always there.

I asked the kids who went to the school who it belonged to and no one knew. I walked the bike home and 30 minutes later I was grabbed. The bike was abandoned by the person that stole it from someone else. So I was gotten for theft of stolen property. Since I am 30 and I don't have prior convictions of any sort, the conviction is going to be deferred, which means it will cease to exist after a year if I pay a fine and do

community service
(13) If the gathering is gonna be in New England next year, I'm not gonna go because of travel-wise, but if it's in Washington State the year after that, I'll go.

Being with my father, my memories of him are at the gathering, because that's so much of his life. Most of the eclectic tribes of America. Being part of the Fourth of July circle is an amazing thing. Instead of drinking liquor and shooting fireworks, you're there with friends and family, showing the world it can be done, being part of the largest unorganized organization in the world.